

USAF INSTRUCTORS JOURNAL



EDUCATION FOR AEROSPACE LEADERS

BY LT. GEN. JOHN W. CARPENTER, III,
COMMANDER, AIR UNIVERSITY

Reprinted from the Spring 1966 issue of "USAF Instructors Journal"

EDUCATION FOR AEROSPACE LEADERS

LIEUTENANT GENERAL JOHN W. CARPENTER, III

Commander, Air University
Maxwell AFB, Ala.

AIR UNIVERSITY's dynamic educational system, organized and constituted to keep pace with today's explosive technologies, provides professional military education for the leaders of the nation's aerospace force. Unique among the organizations of the military services, Air University, a major command, has all its professional military educational activities organized under a single command; hence, it is free to devote all its efforts to its far-reaching education mission.

When Lt. Gen. John W. Carpenter, III, became Air University commander in August 1965, he re-entered the professional education program he helped structure 20 years ago. He was a member of the original Air Command and Staff College faculty. General Carpenter studied engineering at Oklahoma A&M and Mississippi State College and was graduated from West Point in 1939. He has held various positions involving Air Force planning, research, and education. Because of his outstanding work in research, Mississippi State elected him to membership in Tau Beta Pi, honorary engineering society.

In this progressive and turbulent age, the United States Air Force faces, almost daily, new challenges and new responsibilities. It follows that this powerful instrument of national defense must have the highest type of personnel distinctively tailored for the complex and diverse elements of the USAF mission.

The modern Air Force officer must have both specialized and general knowledge. He must understand the tools, techniques, and doctrines of his profession. In addition, he must be skilled in staff techniques, command, management, employment, weapons, research, political science, economics, and the full range of the humanities. He must be part statesman, lawyer, businessman, preacher, and he must be wholly a leader, both in peacetime and in combat.

Air University's main objective is to equip the Air Force professional with the knowledge and background for successful leadership. Fulfilling its role as



Air University, located at Maxwell AFB, Ala., celebrates its twentieth anniversary this year. Lieutenant General Carpenter was assigned as commander in August 1965.

an Air Force educational, doctrinal, and research center, AU provides education to meet Air Force needs in scientific, technological, managerial, and other specified professional areas.

The Air Force has many jobs which require specialized skills—flying, navigating, maintenance, supply, and duties in many other areas. These skills, which give a man the ability to do a job, are acquired through programs of the Air Training Command. Education, Air University's specialty, goes beyond the ability to do a job and gives the officer a broad base for understanding the employment of air forces and how aerospace power fits into support of national policy.

Twenty years ago, Army Air Force officials established Air University as an integrated, progressive, professional institution for educating officers in the field of aerospace power. Since its establishment, the command has adjusted

its programs to incorporate new development in doctrine, employment, strategy, management, and research. The fundamental principles underlying the founding of the University, however, have remained basically unchanged.

The year 1966 marks the twentieth anniversary of Air University. Established in March 1946, the command held its formal dedication ceremonies in September of that year. Simultaneously, two of its professional graduate schools, Air War College and Air Command and Staff College, began their courses of instruction for Air Force officers. During its 20 years of operation, Air University has acquired other programs and responsibilities. It currently has some 5000 resident students, 78,000 AFROTC cadets, and 250,000 correspondence students on its rolls.

Objectivity, intellectual integrity and refusal to be bound by outmoded tradition are still guiding concepts of the command's educational programs. School curricula point up preparation for future conflict, not for past wars; they use to the fullest extent knowledge students have gained through service experience. Air University operates in an atmosphere of academic freedom which encourages candid questioning of guest lecturers and free discussions of their subject matter. Closed sessions with an off-the-record guarantee to speakers result in forthright, thought-provoking lectures and comments. Instruction emphasizes that the Air Force is basically an instrument for maintaining the peace, but that it must always be ready to carry out its wartime mission.

Five different types of educational programs currently constitute the Air University mission, namely, (1) graduate-level education of a professional, general service-type, which includes the Air War College, Air Command and Staff College, and Squadron Officer School; (2) specialized and technical

educational activities such as the Air Force Institute of Technology, Warfare Systems School, Academic Instructor and Allied Officer School; (3) the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps and Airman Education Commissioning Program, which serve as precommissioning programs; (4) research activities for the Aerospace Studies Institute, Air University Library, the historical archives and all of the professional military schools; and, (5) probably the best known of all the programs is Extension Course Institute (ECI), the Air Force correspondence school.

Air University is the fulfillment of a new idea in military thinking—an idea that developed into a widespread professional education plan vital to the Air Force mission. During its short but productive life span, the command has emerged as a model educational institution with the designation "intellectual heart of American aerospace power." Embodying Air University's academic philosophy is the command motto, *Proficimus More Irretenti*—"We Progress Unhampered by Tradition."

